

Chrono

14 November 1957

MEMORANDUM TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Basic Premise

1. In connection with the work that I am doing for [redacted] on the history of the role of CIA in disarmament, I have been struck by the way in which our Estimates habitually use a phrase such as: "We see no reason to believe that the Soviet Union has changed its objective of world domination." The logic of our analysis seems always to follow from that basic premise. It seems to me, however, that this statement could be an over-simplification of the current view of Soviet leadership, and I would like to suggest alternative wording something like the following:

"Barring the aberrations of a psychopathic personality such as Hitler or Stalin, it is the goal of the leaders of Communism in the USSR to dominate the world, provided they can obtain the acquiescence of the majority and the active support of leading elements in the world's population, and provided they can achieve this position without running a serious risk of major damage to the USSR and can maintain it without prolonged and large-scale terror and blood-shed."

2. Of course, the above does not imply that Soviet leaders would be afraid to fight or might not actually initiate a war if they felt that, on balance, it was in the best interest of the Soviet Union to do so. I feel, however, that if we had some such basic premise as this in mind, we might find that some of our dependent analysis would be modified.

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cc: AD/NE
AD/CI

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